



## LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

Iowa Department of Education

# Iowa Core Curriculum

---

### ➔ What is it?

The Iowa Core Curriculum (Core Curriculum) is a set of essential concepts and skills in literacy, math, science, social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills) that all Iowa students must know by the time they graduate from high school.

The Core Curriculum expands on the Iowa Core Content Standards — enacted by the Iowa legislature in 2007 — by providing more detailed expectations.

To help teachers implement the Iowa Core Curriculum, the Iowa Department of Education (Department) and the Iowa's Area Education Agencies (AEAs) are working together to offer assistance to school districts. This assistance is required because implementation of the Core Curriculum is not a simple check list; it fundamentally addresses the content taught, the instruction of the content, and types of assessment.

Therefore, the Iowa Core Curriculum not only describes what students must master, but it helps teachers determine effective instruction through statewide and AEA-level professional development opportunities.

The vision of the Iowa Core Curriculum is to ensure the success of each and every student by providing a world-class curriculum. It is designed to improve achievement of all students, preparing them for the world of work and citizenship.

### ➔ How did it come about?

Senate File 245 (May 2005) and Senate File 588 (May 2007) established the voluntary Model Core Curriculum in kindergarten through grade 12 in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The 2008 legislature proposed that the Core Curriculum be fully implemented by all Iowa schools — public and accredited nonpublic. The Governor signed Senate File 2216 into law May 1, 2008, which requires the full implementation of the Core Curriculum — in high schools by 2012-2013 and in kindergarten through eighth (K-8) grade by 2014-2015.

Implementation plans are required for high schools by July 1, 2010 and by K-8 schools by July 1, 2012. The Department is encouraging kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (K-12) school systems to develop a K-12 implementation by July 1, 2009.

#### How the Iowa Core Curriculum Benefits Iowa:

- It identifies Iowa as a state that values high expectations for all students and all educators.
- It maximizes the effectiveness of the existing statewide standards and assessment system, which complies with No Child Left Behind. Rather than spending precious resources on developing a new set of standards and statewide test for accountability, funds will expand professional development, technical assistance, and support for improved achievement.
- When implemented with fidelity, it has the capacity to positively impact Iowa's economic base by providing students better prepared for post-secondary education and more skilled employees for the workplace.
- Its emphasis on authentic learning provides Iowa with citizens better prepared to address the complexities of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

(Continued)

Grimes State Office Building - Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

PHONE (515) 281-5294 FAX (515) 242-5988

[www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate)

*Helping Communities Meet the Learning Needs of All Their Children and Adults*



## LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

Iowa Department of Education

### → Where does this initiative currently stand?

The Department is working with Iowa's AEAs to support the roll-out of the Iowa Core Curriculum to local school districts and accredited nonpublic schools. Funds provided by the legislature in 2008 have allowed the Department and AEAs to establish a network of individuals who provide ongoing support and professional development to schools. The network has 47 members: 40 AEA representatives and seven representatives from local school districts. In addition, the network includes 16 representatives from the Department.

Full implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum is a complicated, multi-year process. The first year focuses on developing local leadership teams that will examine district curriculum to assess existing alignment of local standards, benchmarks, and curriculum with the Iowa Core Curriculum. The Department and AEAs have been providing professional development opportunities for school leaders on the skills they will need to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum. This will continue through 2009 as Iowa schools districts develop plans to be certain that all students — no matter their career path — will have mastered the Core Curriculum's essential concepts and skills.

This summer (2009) implementation support begins for teachers. Schools will be grouped into cadres and the start date for full staff involvement will be staggered for each cadre throughout the year and a half. Professional development opportunities will be designed and provided to promote quality teaching with high student expectations in science, math, and literacy curriculum. It will be a collaborative effort of AEAs, the Department, and local schools.

In addition to implementation activities, teams of stakeholders have identified the remaining skills and concepts for grades kindergarten through eighth grade in social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. These teams represent teachers, administrators, AEA staff members, key education associations, and business. These components are scheduled for State Board of Education discussion in February.

The Department has already revised its school district accreditation process to begin including elements of the required implementation.

#### **The Iowa Core Curriculum is *NOT*...**

- An initiative to make all Iowa schools teach the same lesson plans on the same days, or use the same textbooks.
- A move to replace the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or Iowa Test of Educational Development, or to promote a costly new battery of tests.
- An effort to subvert the creative contributions of Iowa's talented teaching professionals.
- A program that will divert money from other education needs.

2008-2009	2009-2013	2014-2015 and beyond
Leadership Development	Planning and Implementation	Full Implementation

Of the \$2,192,351, allocated by the Iowa legislature for the Iowa Core Curriculum, \$1.6 million has been distributed to the AEAs to support 16.5 full-time equivalent positions and 12 percent of the funds are used for professional resources, printing, personnel travel expenses, and professional development expenses. Additionally, AEAs are contributing staff time and resources beyond the funds to accommodate local school needs and development efforts.

The balance (\$592,351) is committed to the continued development of the Iowa Core Curriculum.

*(Continued)*

Grimes State Office Building - Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

PHONE (515) 281-5294 FAX (515) 242-5988

[www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate)

*Helping Communities Meet the Learning Needs of All Their Children and Adults*



## LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

Iowa Department of Education

These efforts include:

- 1) development of essential concepts and skills sets for kindergarten through eighth grade social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills;
- 2) development of example instructional units for kindergarten through eighth grade literacy, science, and mathematics, and grades nine through 12 social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills;
- 3) development of example instructional units illustrating the integration of mathematics, literacy, and science into the fine arts;
- 4) development of processes and protocol tools needed to support school implementation; and
- 5) preparation of unique professional development materials.

### ➔ **How will this initiative help Iowa students?**

The Iowa Core Curriculum works to ensure that students will grasp complex ideas through a focus on essential topics. By focusing on *what* is being taught as well as *how* to teach, the Core Curriculum provides high expectations for quality student work. It moves students beyond just knowing content to deeper thinking, understanding, problem solving, and inquiry. These are the teaching methods that are used in countries that are outpacing the United States.

The Core Curriculum enhances student engagement by involving students in interesting, relevant learning experiences that are motivating and lead to positive outcomes. Students will leave school equipped to succeed regardless of their postsecondary plans.

### ➔ **Where can I get more information?**

Please visit the Iowa Department of Education website at [www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate), and click on “Iowa Core Curriculum” on the left-hand side of the homepage. Additional information also follows this brief.

# **Iowa Core Curriculum**

## **Annual Report**

*Iowa Department of Education*  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319

January 2009

State of Iowa  
**Department of Education**  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 E 14<sup>th</sup> St  
Des Moines IA 50319-0146

## **State Board of Education**

Rosie Hussey, President, Clear Lake  
Charles C. Edwards, Jr., Vice President, Des Moines  
Sister Jude Fitzpatrick, West Des Moines  
Brian Gentry, Des Moines  
Wayne Kobberdahl, Council Bluffs  
Valorie J. Kruse, Sioux City  
Max Phillips, Woodward  
LaMetta Wynn, Clinton  
Kameron Dodge, Student Member, Cambridge  
Vacant

## **Administration**

Judy A. Jeffrey, Director and Executive Officer  
of the State Board of Education  
Gail M. Sullivan, Chief of Staff

**Division of PK-12 Education**  
Kevin Fangman, Administrator

**Bureau of Teaching and Learning Services**  
Jim Reese, Chief  
Rita Martens, Lead Consultant

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the *Iowa Code* sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688) Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.).

If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E 14<sup>th</sup> St, Des Moines IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 111 N. Canal Street, Suite 1053, Chicago, IL 60606-7204

**Introduction.** The Iowa Core Curriculum is a set of essential concepts and skills in literacy, math, science, social studies, and 21st century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills) that all Iowa students must know by the time they graduate from high school.

The Iowa Core Curriculum expands on the Iowa Core Content Standards — enacted by the Iowa legislature in 2007 — by providing more detailed expectations.

To help teachers implement the Iowa Core Curriculum, the Iowa Department of Education (Department) and Iowa's Area Education Agencies (AEAs) are working together to offer assistance to school districts. This assistance is required because implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum is not a simple check list; it fundamentally addresses the content taught, the instruction of the content, and types of assessment.

Therefore, the Iowa Core Curriculum not only describes what students must master, but it helps teachers determine effective instruction through statewide and AEA-level professional development opportunities.

The vision of the Iowa Core Curriculum is to ensure the success of each and every student by providing a world-class curriculum. It is designed to improve achievement of all students, preparing them for the world of work and citizenship.

The Iowa Core Curriculum identifies Iowa as a state that values high expectations for all students and all educators and maximizes the effectiveness of the existing statewide standards and assessment system, which complies with No Child Left Behind. Rather than spending precious resources on developing a new set of standards and statewide test for accountability, funds will expand professional development, technical assistance and support for improved achievement.

When implemented with fidelity, it has the capacity to positively impact Iowa's economic base by better preparing students for postsecondary education and more skilled employees for the workplace. Its emphasis on authentic learning provides Iowa with citizens better prepared to address the complexities of life in the 21st century.

The Iowa Core Curriculum is not an effort to make all Iowa schools teach the same lesson plans on the same days, use the same textbooks, replace the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Iowa Test of Educational Development, or to promote a costly new battery of tests. The Iowa Core Curriculum does not subvert the creative contributions of Iowa's talented teaching professionals nor does it divert money from other relevant and important education needs.

**Legislative Foundation.** Senate File 245 (May 2005) and Senate File 588 (May 2007) established the voluntary Model Core Curriculum in kindergarten through grade 12 in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st century skills. The 2008 Legislature proposed that the Iowa Core Curriculum be fully implemented by all Iowa schools — public and accredited nonpublic. The Governor signed Senate File 2216 into law May 1, 2008, which requires the full implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum — in high schools by 2012-2013 and in K-8 by 2014-2015. Implementation plans are required for high schools by July 1, 2010 and by K-8 schools by July 1, 2012. The Department is encouraging K-12 school systems to develop a K-12 implementation by July 1, 2009.

**Current Status.** The Department is working with Iowa's AEAs to support the roll-out of the Iowa Core Curriculum to local school districts and accredited nonpublic schools. Funds provided by the Legislature in 2008 have allowed the Department and AEAs to establish a network of individuals who provide ongoing support and professional development to schools. The network has 47 members: 40 AEA representatives and seven representatives from local school districts. In addition, the network includes 16 representatives from the Department.

Full implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum is a complicated, multi-year process. The first year focuses on developing local leadership teams that will examine district curriculum to assess existing alignment of local standards, benchmarks, and curriculum with the Iowa Core Curriculum. The Department and AEAs have been providing professional development opportunities for school leaders on the skills they will need to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum. This will continue through 2009 as Iowa school districts develop plans to be certain that all students — no matter their career path — will have mastered the Iowa Core Curriculum's essential concepts and skills.

This summer (2009) implementation support begins for teachers. Schools will be grouped into cadres and the start date for full staff involvement will be staggered for each cadre throughout the year and a half. Professional development opportunities will be designed and provided to promote quality teaching with high student expectations in science, math, and literacy curriculum. It will be a collaborative effort of AEAs, the Department, and local schools.

In addition to implementation activities, teams of stakeholders have identified the remaining skills and concepts for grades K-8 in social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. These teams represent teachers, administrators, AEA staff, key education associations, and businesses. These components are scheduled for State Board of Education discussion in February.

The Department has already revised its school district accreditation process to begin including elements of the required implementation.

2008-2009	2009-2013	2014-2015 and beyond
Leadership Development	Planning and Implementation	Full Implementation

Of the \$2,192,351, allocated by the Iowa Legislature for the Iowa Core Curriculum, \$1.6 million has been distributed to the AEAs to support 16.5 full-time equivalent positions and 12 percent of the funds is used for professional resources, printing, personnel travel expenses, and professional development expenses. Additionally, AEAs are contributing staff time and resources beyond the funds to accommodate local school needs and development efforts.

The balance (\$592,351) is committed to the continued development of the Iowa Core Curriculum.

Efforts include:

- 1) development of essential concepts and skills sets for kindergarten through eighth grade social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills;
- 2) development of example instructional units for kindergarten through eighth grade literacy, science, and mathematics; and grades nine through 12 social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills;
- 3) development of example instructional units illustrating the integration of mathematics, literacy, and science into the fine arts;

- 4) development of processes and protocol tools needed to support school implementation; and
- 5) preparation of unique professional development materials.

**Student Benefit.** The Iowa Core Curriculum works to ensure that students will grasp complex ideas through a focus on essential topics. By focusing on *what* is being taught as well as *how* to teach, the Iowa Core Curriculum provides high expectations for quality student work. It moves students beyond just knowing content to deeper thinking, understanding, problem solving, and inquiry. These are the teaching methods that are used in countries that are outpacing the United States.

The Iowa Core Curriculum enhances student engagement by involving students in interesting, relevant learning experiences that are motivating and lead to positive outcomes. Students will leave school equipped to succeed regardless of their postsecondary plans.

For more information, please visit

[http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=674&Itemid=1249](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=674&Itemid=1249).

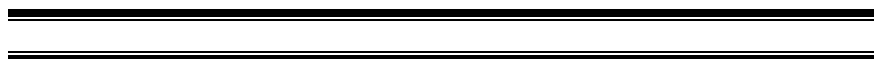


# Iowa Core Curriculum

Senate File 2216

Iowa Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319

November 2008



# **State Board of Education**

State of Iowa

## **Department of Education**

Grimes State Office Building  
400 E 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines IA 50319-0146

### **State Board of Education**

Rosie Hussey, President, Clear Lake  
Charles C. Edwards, Jr., Vice President, Des Moines  
Sister Jude Fitzpatrick, West Des Moines  
Brian Gentry, Des Moines  
Joan Jaimes, Marshalltown  
Wayne Kobberdahl, Council Bluffs  
Valorie J. Kruse, Sioux City  
Max Phillips, Woodward  
LaMetta Wynn, Clinton  
Kameron Dodge, (Student Member), Cambridge

### **Administration**

Judy A. Jeffrey,  
Director and Executive Officer of the State Board of Education  
Gail M. Sullivan, Chief of Staff

### **Division of PK-12 Education**

Kevin Fangman, Administrator

## **Bureau of Teaching and Learning Services**

Jim Reese, Chief  
Rita Martens, Lead Consultant

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the *Iowa Code* sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688) Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.).

If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E 14<sup>th</sup> St, Des Moines IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 111 N. Canal Street, Suite 1053, Chicago, IL 60606-7204.

## INTRODUCTION

Section 159. 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2216, is amended to read as follows:

SEC. 6. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION = CORE CURRICULUM STUDY. The department of education shall conduct a study of the measures necessary for the successful adoption by the state's school districts and accredited nonpublic schools of core curriculums and core content standards established by rule pursuant to section 256.7, subsections 26 and 28. The study shall include an examination of the possible future expansion of the core curriculum to include content areas not currently included under section 256.7, subsection 26, including but not limited to fine arts, applied arts, humanities, and world languages. The department shall submit its findings and recommendations, including recommendations for statutory and administrative rule changes necessary, to the general assembly by November 14, 2008.

---

### Measures Necessary for Successful Adoption.

As part of the Iowa Department of Education's (Department) study, an advisory group was formed to provide input and guidance about the successful implementation of the core curriculum. Membership on the group included representation from local schools, area education agencies (AEAs), educator preparation programs, and key stakeholder groups (Iowa Association of School Boards, Iowa State Education Association, and School Administrators of Iowa). Additionally, the Department and chief administrators of the area education agencies collaborated to create a statewide system of support around the core curriculum for local schools. Based on the input from these groups, the following measures were identified as critical to successful implementation of the core curriculum by the local schools:

1. a clear statement of mission with guiding principles;
2. the development of processes, protocols, tools and resources that promote and support local school engagement with content, instruction, and assessment as well as the alignment of content, instruction, and assessment for successful implementation of the core curriculum;
3. the preparation and deployment of a statewide cadre of educational personnel to support local schools with the implementation of the core curriculum;
4. the preparation of local school leadership (administrators and teachers) on the substance of the core curriculum, necessary leadership actions, and specific strategies, tools and resources;
5. the development and use of a system for noting progress in implementing the core curriculum and assessing the impact on student achievement and school staff;

6. the inclusion of school leaders, administrators and teachers in the development of resources and procedures that support implementation;
7. the development of a communication strategy specific to the core curriculum and its implementation by local schools;
8. integration of the requirements of the core curriculum with other required plans and actions placed on local schools, including the analysis of current state school policy, including legislation and administrative rules;
9. the development of a strategy that maintains the focus on implementing and resourcing the core curriculum across time at all levels of government and school administration, all school personnel, and communities; and
10. involvement of practitioner preparation programs from both public and private universities in all training related to the Iowa Core Curriculum so new graduates in the field of education are prepared to teach in Iowa schools.

#### Creation of Advisory Group for Assessment.

An assessment advisory group has been convened and will meet beginning in January 2009. They will give input to the Department regarding assessments that align with the expectations in the Iowa Core Curriculum.

#### Expansion of Core Curriculum.

The core curriculum could be expanded to include other content areas, specifically the fine arts, applied arts, humanities and world languages provided the resources are made available to the Department to accomplish the work in the same manner as the current core curriculum content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Specifically, resources would be needed to support the work of development teams with educators representing different parts of the K-12 education system as well as higher education for each of the content areas being added. Additionally, resources would be needed to continue the leadership role of the Project Lead Team in the development process.

#### Statutory and Administrative Rule Changes.

The Department is continuing its review of Iowa Code, especially Chapters 256 and 280 as well as relevant administrative rules, specifically Education Department[281] Chapter 12. The purpose of the review is multifaceted: identify inconsistencies or conflicts in the Code or rules with the recent statutory requirements for the core curriculum and identify specific changes in administrative rules. The Department will complete its review and provide specific recommendations for the General Assembly on or before November 15, 2009.



# STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR  
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
JUDY A. JEFFREY, DIRECTOR

DATE: January 12, 2009

TO: AEA Chief Administrators  
AEA Steering Committee

FROM: Kevin Fangman, Administrator  
Division of PK-12 Education

SUBJECT: AEA Plans for the Iowa Core Curriculum

Area Education Agencies (AEA) have received Teacher Quality (TQ) funding for supporting the implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum. This funding is intended to be used to build capacity of the AEA staff to support local district implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum Outcomes. **AEAs are responsible for developing an implementation plan for the Iowa Core Curriculum. Teacher Quality Committees (TQC) are responsible for distributing the Iowa Core Curriculum TQ funds to the actions identified in the plan.** The TQC shall allocate the funds for professional development related to the implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum and will distribute the funds according to the implementation plan for their agency. Formal implementation plans are not required of districts/AEAs until 2010. AEAs may present initial implementation actions to the TQC so money can be distributed to support the initial work before the agency's implementation plan is complete.

Below you will find a protocol for developing the AEA Iowa Core Curriculum Implementation Plan. To guide our technical assistance efforts and to assist with decision making about funding, please submit your agency's initial Iowa Core Curriculum Implementation Plan to me by February 1, 2009:

Kevin Fangman, Administrator  
Iowa Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 E 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319

AEAs and districts are encouraged to construct their Iowa Core Curriculum Implementation Plan over an extended period of time. Initial portions of the plan may be completed during the 2008-2009 school year, with remaining portions of the plan added as the Leadership Team learns more about how to use the processes and protocols provided by the Iowa Core Curriculum Network.

This memo has been distributed to the AEA Chief Administrators and the AEA Steering Committee.

Grimes State Office Building - 400 E 14th St - Des Moines IA 50319-0146

PHONE (515) 281-5294 FAX (515) 242-5988

[www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate)

*Helping Communities Meet the Learning Needs of All Their Children and Adults*

## **AEA Iowa Core Curriculum Implementation Plan**

Area Education Agencies (AEA) have received Teacher Quality funding for supporting the implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum. This funding is intended to be used to build capacity of the AEA staff to support local district implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum Outcomes. The outcomes to be implemented by districts and nonpublic schools are listed below:

- Outcome 1: School leaders build and sustain system capacity to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum.
- Outcome 2: Community members and other supporting agencies work together to support the implementation of the Iowa Core Curriculum.
- Outcome 3: A continuous improvement process to improve teaching and learning is used at the district and school level.
- Outcome 4: District leaders and other educators monitor and use data to increase the degree of alignment of each and every student's enacted curriculum and other relevant educational opportunities to the Iowa Core Curriculum.
- Outcome 5: Educators engage in professional development focused on implementing Characteristics of Effective Instruction and demonstrate understanding of Essential Concepts and Skill Sets.
- Outcome 6: Educators implement effective instructional practices to ensure high levels of learning for each and every student.

This plan must be completed by the AEA and used by the Teacher Quality Committee to inform their decisions about how to distribute and allocate the Iowa Core Curriculum funds.

## AEA Iowa Core Curriculum Implementation Plan

AEA: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Submitting Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

	Actions*	Role Groups (Audience)	Document Progress	Allocation of Teacher Quality Core Funds
<b>AEA staff members deliver technical assistance to local districts and nonpublic schools to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum.</b>				
<b>AEA Network members monitor the progress of districts and non-public schools to provide responsive support.</b>				
<b>AEA staff members engage in professional learning to acquire skills needed to support the Iowa Core Curriculum.</b>				

**\* If the AEA Professional Development plan fully describes the capacity building to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum, refer to that plan in the Iowa Core Curriculum Action Plan Table, and attach the AEA professional development plan.**

# Iowa CORE Curriculum



## Overview



**September 5, 2008**



## **State Board of Education**

State of Iowa  
Department of Education  
Grimes State Office Building  
400 E 14<sup>th</sup> St  
Des Moines IA 50319-0146

## **State Board of Education**

Rosie Hussey, President, Clear Lake  
Charles C. Edwards, Jr., Vice President, Des Moines  
Sister Jude Fitzpatrick, West Des Moines  
Brian Gentry, Des Moines  
Joan Jaimes, Marshalltown  
Wayne Kobberdahl, Council Bluffs  
Valorie J. Kruse, Sioux City  
Max Phillips, Woodward  
LaMetta Wynn, Clinton  
Kameron Dodge, (Student Member), Cambridge

## **Administration**

Judy A. Jeffrey, Director and Executive Officer of the State Board of Education  
Gail M. Sullivan, Chief of Staff

## **Division of PK-12 Education**

Kevin Fangman, Administrator

## **Bureau of Teaching and Learning Services**

Jim Reese, Chief

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the *Iowa Code* sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688) Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.).

If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, 400 E 14<sup>th</sup> St, Des Moines IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 111 N. Canal Street, Suite 1053, Chicago, IL 60606-7204.

## **Table of Contents**

■ What vision does the Iowa Core Curriculum advance? .....	1
■ What policies created the Iowa Core Curriculum? .....	1
■ What is the Iowa Core Curriculum? .....	2
■ What does the Iowa Core Curriculum look like? .....	4
■ What are the benefits of the Iowa Core Curriculum to students? .....	6
■ What are the benefits of the Iowa Core Curriculum to educators? .....	7
■ What are the benefits to the state? .....	8
■ How do we know the Iowa Core Curriculum is credible? .....	8
■ What assumptions guide this work? .....	10
■ Who is leading the work to develop and build statewide capacity to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum? .....	13
■ What should be considered in the design for successful implementation? .....	14
■ References .....	16

## Iowa Core Curriculum Overview

- Each and every K-12 student will learn the essential concepts and skill sets identified in the Iowa Core Curriculum for life in the 21st century.
- Each K-12 educator will embed the essential concepts and skill sets in rigorous and relevant instruction informed by ongoing formative assessment.
- Each and every educational leader will ensure an aligned system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, focused on the Core Curriculum essential concepts and skill sets
- The Iowa Department of Education, AEAs, LEAs, and collaborative partners will work together to provide the systems of supports to establish and sustain structures for the essential concepts and skill sets, instruction, and assessment.

### ■ What vision does the Iowa Core Curriculum advance?

The vision for the Iowa Core Curriculum is to ensure the success of each and every student by providing a world-class curriculum. The Core Curriculum is designed to improve achievement of all students, preparing them for the world of work and lifelong learning. It identifies the essential content and instruction that all students must experience.

**The technical assistance efforts supported by the Core Curriculum Department of Education Team, the Advisory Team and the Core Curriculum Area Education Agency (AEA) Network are designed to provide Iowa educators with the tools to assure that essential subject matter is being taught and essential knowledge and skills are being learned.**

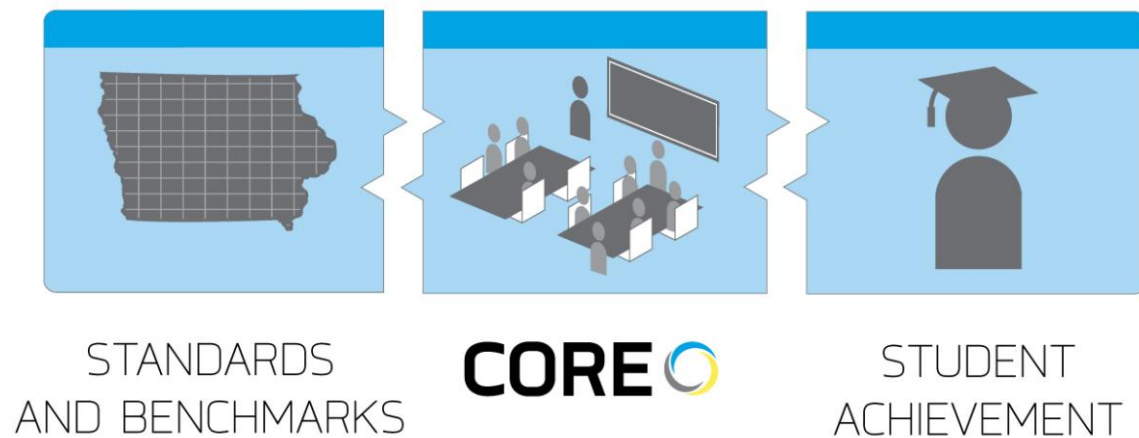
School districts that implement the Core Curriculum with integrity increase the likelihood that all students become life-long learners, productive adults, and engaged citizens. The Department improvement efforts are designed to yield positive results by enabling schools to prepare students to graduate with the 21st century skills and competencies needed to be successful in post-high school endeavors and the world of work.

### ■ What policies created the Iowa Core Curriculum?

Senate File 245 (May 2005) and Senate File 588 (May 2007) established the voluntary Model Core Curriculum in K-12 literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st century skills. Governor Chet Culver proposed that the Core Curriculum be fully implemented by all Iowa schools – public and accredited nonpublic. The Governor signed Senate File 2216 into law May 1, 2008, which requires the full implementation of the Core Curriculum – in high schools by July 1, 2012 and K-8 by 2014-15. Implementation plans are required for high schools by July 1, 2010 and by K-8 schools by July 1, 2012. The Department is encouraging K-12 school systems to develop a K-12 implementation by July 1, 2009.

## ■ What is the Iowa Core Curriculum?

The Core Curriculum provides the details for teachers to make sure students reach Iowa's Core Content Standards and Benchmarks. It assists teachers in knowing how to integrate essential concepts and skills into student learning opportunities. The Core Curriculum is about teaching and learning; it provides examples of powerful instruction clearly tied to classroom assessments. It provides a comprehensive picture of effective curriculum that addresses pedagogy, content knowledge, and assessment.



The purpose of the Core Curriculum is to raise student expectations and change teaching behaviors to impact student achievement. The Core Curriculum provides the processes and establishes the urgency to set higher expectations and infuse more challenging and meaningful content into classroom instruction.

## Standards in Iowa Education

The Iowa Core Curriculum integrates the Iowa Core Content Standards and Benchmarks, the National Assessment of Educational Progress frameworks, and national curriculum documents in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st century skills.

In Iowa, we have many standards:

- **Accreditation Standards** – These standards describe minimum requirements that must be met for an Iowa school district to be accredited. A nonpublic school must meet general accreditation standards if it wishes to be designated as accredited for operation in Iowa.
- **Program Standards** – These standards describe the instruction that all public and accredited nonpublic schools must offer students prekindergarten through grade twelve.
- **Teaching and Leadership Standards** – These standards describe the performance Iowa expects of its educators.
- **Core Content Standards** – Broad statements that identify the knowledge and skills that students should acquire, in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- **Performance standards** – Levels of performance are described as high – distinguished and accomplished, intermediate – skilled and moderate, low – marginal and weak.

The Core Content Standards are supported by a system that is comprised of several components: assessments, teacher professional development, curriculum, grade level expectations, and benchmarks.

A benchmark is a learning target for a grade level span. Grade level indicators provide further detail and show what learning targets look like for each grade K-8.

There is an evidence base supporting the implementation of the Core Curriculum. A significant body of work by multiple theorists and researchers asserts that the content of instruction plays a primary role in determining gains in student achievement (Garmoran, Porter, Smithson, & White, 1997; McKnight et al, 1987; Rowan, 1998; Schmidt, 1983a, 1983b; Sebring, 1987; Walberg & Shanahan, 1983). The Core Curriculum helps to focus the curriculum on higher order skills and increase the cognitive demands placed on students. Challenging instruction yields positive student outcomes.

The Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS) and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and other international studies suggest that providing students with opportunities to learn using a focused curriculum that emphasizes depth of knowledge and skills and encourages thinking and cognitively complex applications leads to improved student performance (Niebling, Roach, Rahn-Blakeslee, 2008).

## ■ What does the Iowa Core Curriculum look like?

The Core Curriculum is not just a document distributed to school districts. Ongoing and sustained professional development and leadership will be required to guide and enhance curriculum content, classroom instruction, and classroom assessment. School district personnel will analyze both the content and instruction of their current curriculum, find the gaps, and as needed, restructure their current instructional program to incorporate the Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum is not course-based, but rather is a student-based approach that supports high expectations for all students.

The Department is committed to providing leadership, policy, professional development, and technical assistance to assist Iowa's schools in enhancing learning for all students in each content area. The Department advocates and supports the implementation of a consistent approach to instructional improvement that integrates multiple components

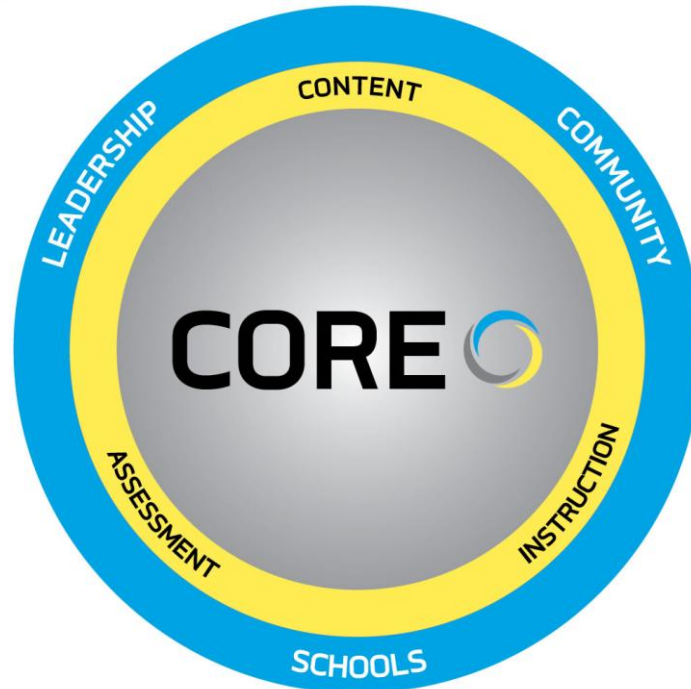
The Iowa Core Curriculum focuses on accelerating student achievement. Iowa has a system of Iowa Core Standards, Benchmarks, and grade level indicators that contributes to our tradition of high student performance. The Core Curriculum provides direction about essential content, authentic instruction, and authentic assessment for the core content areas of literacy, mathematics, science and social studies. An additional emphasis on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills addresses the content students need to flourish in a world marked by a changing workforce and rising global competition. The Core Curriculum provides all schools with the three essential characteristics of a quality instructional program: 1) a guaranteed and viable curriculum, 2) data-driven processes, and 3) practices and methodologies that are evidence-based.

The Department supports a range of instructional initiatives providing school districts and AEAs with replicable approaches to implement authentic instruction and assessment in each core content area. Literacy, mathematics, and science initiatives are currently being implemented across the state, as is professional development in authentic instruction that is not content area-specific. The Department has plans to include initiatives supportive of social studies and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Quality education in Iowa is supported by the successful implementation of the Core Curriculum. This requires the inclusion of system level supports: Learning Supports, the Instructional Decision Making process, and the Iowa Professional Development Model. To accomplish an improved educational system and student learning through curriculum reform, school leaders at the state, regional and local level must maintain an unrelenting focus on improving not just the practices used by teachers to deliver instruction to all students, but also the organizational structures and supports.

To effectively incorporate the Iowa Core Curriculum into practice, Iowa school leaders must support the implementation and sustainability of instruction. Leadership needs to be focused on learning, and leaders need to ask hard questions about teaching practices and student learning and consistently know and model the knowledge and

skills needed to do the work (Elmore, January 2002; May, 2002; November, 2003). As schools engage in the curriculum and instruction framed by the Iowa Core Curriculum, distributed leadership is needed alongside of quality professional development to ensure success. Leaders must make sustainability of instruction a priority by committing to and protecting the conceptual learning of students, distributing leadership and responsibility to others, and actively engaging in classroom environments (Hargreaves & Fink, April 2004).



- Students learn more and achievement improves when Content is challenging, relevant, and promotes engaging learning experiences.
- The quality of Instruction and learning improves when teachers know what to teach – The Iowa Core Content Standards and Benchmarks and the Core Curriculum provide the direction and details teachers need to know to plan and deliver effective instruction.
- Instruction is more responsive to student needs when authentic, valid and reliable Assessments are used to measure progress and motivate students to reach their learning goals.
- The goals of the Core Curriculum will be accomplished when Schools and supporting agencies function as an integrated system and provide a coordinated approach, consistent communication, and differentiated delivery.
- Implementation of the Core Curriculum will be successful when committed Leadership actions are focused and committed to providing the expertise, guidance, and resources needed to support teaching and learning.
- Making systematic changes and providing ongoing supports to improve instruction, content, and assessment will be successful when the Community is fully informed and actively engaged in the process. Effective implementation occurs when multiple partners including business and industry and communities are interdependent.

## ■ What are the benefits of the Iowa Core Curriculum to students?

The Core Curriculum:

- Ensures that students will grasp big ideas through a focus on essential topics.
- Moves students beyond superficial knowledge to deep conceptual and procedural knowledge through learning for understanding, problem solving, and inquiry.
- Provides students opportunities to learn rigorous, robust content through the effective pedagogy of the Core Curriculum. Students will leave school equipped to succeed regardless of their postsecondary plans.
- Enhances student engagement by involving students in interesting, relevant learning experiences that are motivating and lead to positive outcomes and less negative behavior.

*For most students, the usual work demanded in school is rarely considered meaningful, or worthwhile. Learning tasks call for specific memorized information, retrieval of given information or application of routine computational procedures, but rarely do they call for higher-level thinking, interpretation, or in-depth conceptual understanding.*

*Newmann, King, and Carmichael, 2007*

- Facilitates reduction in fragmentation and redundancy that sometimes occurs in school curricula thus creating more effective use of instructional time.
- Promotes the use of formative assessments that are based on authentic content taught in a meaningful way and engages students more directly in monitoring their progress and growth, thus providing a motivator to improve.
- Promotes clear communication between parents, teachers, and students about what a student is to know and be able to do as he or she moves through the K-12 educational system.
- Promotes student learning through the development of conceptual understanding and application of knowledge. Examples:
 

Math:	Shifts from memorizing and practicing facts and procedures to understanding and applying concepts, practices, and facts.
Literacy:	Shifts from a primary focus on reading and writing in English/Language Arts classes to the integration and practical application of all five literacy skills – reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening – across all content domains.
Science:	Shifts from lecture, an over-emphasis on textbook readings and “cookbook” labs to learning through actively investigating, designing experiments, questioning, exploring, and defending conclusions.



Social Studies:	Shifts from lecture and recitation of discrete pieces of information to the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with the economic, political, civic, and social forces that are relevant to the world in which students live.
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills	Shifts from a traditional system that may not include the incorporation of these skills into curriculum for all, to one that requires that all students leave school prepared to succeed in the complex new, 21 <sup>st</sup> century. Essential concepts and skill sets include employability skills, financial literacy, health literacy, and technology literacy.

### ■ What are the benefits of the Core Curriculum to educators?

- Teachers who deliver instruction focused on the Core Curriculum will have confidence that their content and pedagogy are research-based or evidence-based.
- When the content is focused, quality professional development can provide important professional growth for teachers to improve their instructional practices. Teachers engaged in quality professional learning are more likely to be productive and positive learners and improve the learning culture of the school (Iowa Teaching Standards #2 and #7).
- As school staffs analyze local curriculum and instruction to identify opportunities for improvement, they are likely to discover that they spend too much instructional time teaching content that is not essential and not enough time focusing on the critical content. This process will help schools determine what to do more of and what to eliminate or decrease.
- As school staffs focus on improving instruction, they may discover instructional practices that are commonly used but ineffective and decide to replace those practices with more effective, research supported ones.
- The Core Curriculum provides consistency among Iowa's schools and districts, which will aid teacher preparation programs at universities and colleges to better prepare teacher candidates to successfully enter Iowa's teacher workforce.
- Teachers who are focused on the Core Curriculum are less distracted by fads and superficial projects that are unlikely to yield results.
- When teachers design formative assessment practices based on authentic content, data will be useful for shaping future instruction.
- The Core Curriculum provides school administrators further opportunities to support balanced leadership by giving them tools to actively help teachers with issues regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Standard 2, Iowa School Leaders Standards and Balanced Leadership Responsibilities).

*Through the process of improving lessons and sharing with colleagues the knowledge they acquire, something remarkable happens to teachers: they begin viewing themselves as true professionals. They see themselves contributing to the knowledge base that defines the profession. And they see this as an integral part of what it means to be a teacher.*

*Stigler, J. W, & Hiebert, J. (1999).*

## ■ What are the benefits to the state?

- The Core Curriculum identifies Iowa as a state that values high expectations for all students and all educators.
- Common beliefs about important content and robust instruction create continuity across the state for educators and students.
- The Core Curriculum galvanizes educators to take action to improve teaching and learning by encouraging educators and community members to strive toward a common goal with the same priorities.
- The Core Curriculum facilitates coherence. The orchestration of all the components fit together in a way that makes sense to stakeholders.
- The Core Curriculum extends the Iowa Core Content Standards and Benchmarks to identify priorities to improve the educational system in all of Iowa's schools.
- The Core Curriculum maximizes the effectiveness of the existing statewide assessment system, which was developed to comply with NCLB. Rather than spending precious resources on developing a new set of standards and statewide test for accountability, funds will expand professional development, technical assistance and support for improved achievement.
- The Core Curriculum, if implemented with fidelity, improves test scores and increases the number of graduates who are poised to pursue post-secondary opportunities.
- The Core Curriculum, when implemented with fidelity, has the capacity to positively impact Iowa's economic base by providing more skilled employees for the workplace and students better prepared for post-secondary education.
- The Core Curriculum's emphasis on authentic learning provides Iowa with citizens better prepared to address the complexities of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## ■ How do we know the Iowa Core Curriculum is credible?

Multiple sources have been consulted in the development of essential concepts and skill sets of the Core Curriculum:

- Research and best practice literature for each content area has been reviewed.

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Frameworks provided a tool to monitor that essential content in each discipline is covered.
- Student performance data from ACT, Iowa Testing Services, and NAEP were used to identify the strengths and areas of needed improvement of Iowa's students.
- Standards from ACT, College Board, American Diploma Project, and others were utilized in an alignment study.
- National curriculum documents in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, especially civic literacy, health literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, and employability skills were integrated into the development.
- Other states' and international standards were consulted.

The Department has also accessed nationally recognized researchers and program development experts in developing the approach to implementation of effective instructional improvements:

- Drs. Fred Newmann, Bruce King, and Dana Carmichael are facilitating capacity building in quality instruction through the implementation of Authentic Intellectual Work in selected Iowa classrooms. The Department plans to continue to extend this work across Iowa in collaboration with the AEAs.
- Dr. Richard Stiggins, Margaret Heritage, and other nationally known experts in formative assessment have developed training materials and have prepared Department consultants to integrate "classroom assessment for learning" practices into all the Department efforts centered on improving instruction.
- Dr. Richard Elmore has provided consultation and technical assistance about leadership and school reform to school administrators and other stakeholders in Iowa. The development of technical assistance for the Core Curriculum has utilized his writing about the core of educational practice. Elmore's publications describe the leadership needed to reform schools in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Dr. John Smithson of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research has assisted the Department in completing a study of current content and instructional practices in high school literacy, mathematics, and science. The results of this study will be used to help the Department establish professional development priorities.

## ■ What assumptions guide this work?

**Challenging instruction yields positive student outcomes.** The Core Curriculum helps to focus the curriculum on higher order skills and increases the cognitive demands placed on students. This is essential to accelerate student achievement.

**Educators need specific content area support to accomplish the goals established by the Iowa Core Content Standards and Benchmarks.** The Iowa Core Content Standards and Benchmarks set broad, overarching learning goals for Iowa's students. These standards are clarified, refined, and extended by the Core Curriculum to create a more descriptive and specific focus for student learning. The specificity in the Core Curriculum enables teachers and administrators to integrate these into the existing curriculum and plan authentic learning experiences, establish worthwhile assessment practices, and develop accountability processes that are more meaningful to students, families, and communities.

**State and national policy set the context for the Core Curriculum.** Iowa legislation, policy, rules, and the state plan for implementing NCLB have requirements that must be addressed when designing a standards-based system of curriculum and assessment.

**Student data drive decisions about curriculum and instruction.** The primary sources of the student achievement data are district-level assessments, class-room-level assessments, and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development. Other sources of data include, but are not limited to achievement gap analysis, academic goals, graduation rates, drop-out rates, attendance rates, postsecondary success data, core program completion, and professional development participation. The Instructional Decision Making process provides direction to effectively meet each student's individual learning needs.

**School teams use formative assessment effectively to monitor student learning and make decisions about effective instruction.** Teachers examine student work to find out whether students have a deep understanding that enables them to apply knowledge. When teachers discover that adequate learning has not taken place, they re-teach and offer additional support for students.

**Schools use program evaluation processes to monitor progress toward the initiative's goals and justify revisions in the action plans.** Summative processes are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative or instructional program and guide decisions about future directions.

**The successful implementation of the Core Curriculum relies upon effective leadership and commitment from administration.** School administrators will be actively engaged in the alignment process, the instructional review, and the development of subsequent changes in both content and instruction. Beyond alignment, there is considerable work for leadership: creating and sustaining a culture where professional development is valued, leadership models and supports quality instruction,

collaboration with colleagues around teaching and learning is the norm, and data is organized, analyzed, and interpreted to make instructional decisions around the Core Curriculum.

**At the systems level, collaboration occurs among the Department, AEAs, and education stakeholders.** Collaborative structures are needed to put the Core Curriculum into place. Stakeholder input, including that from business and industry, is essential to design a viable system and solve the problems that are inherent to any large scale systems change. A collaborative effort will be used to establish parameters, leadership, resources, and support to guide this reform effort.

**Effective state-wide implementation requires a coordinated approach including consistent communication and differentiated delivery.** Processes and tools will be implemented consistently across the state. Multiple points of entry will assist schools and AEAs in tailoring the Core Curriculum to most effectively meet the needs of each individual school.

**Professional development is essential to build capacity for improved instruction in the core content areas.** The Core Curriculum will only accomplish its desired intent if teachers develop the instructional skills to deliver the curriculum. Professional development of high quality with multiple opportunities for teachers and school leaders to participate in meaningful learning opportunities is needed to build knowledge and skills. Professional development engages school leaders and teachers in learning opportunities designed to

- Increase content knowledge and improve pedagogy;
- Facilitate rich discussions about instructional practices that will lead to pedagogical change;
- Keep participants focused on the essential concepts and skill sets and characteristics of effective instruction; and
- Collaborate to learn and apply new knowledge and skills.

**The procedural work of conducting the alignment process and review of instructional practices are essential organizational efforts that will be critical anchor points for determining professional development priorities.** The professional development efforts will focus squarely on teaching practices, learning new pedagogy and content knowledge. The curriculum alignment work and professional development focused on instruction are critical complimentary pieces.

**Collaboration at the school level is essential to the Core Curriculum approach.** Collaboration occurs among teachers, students, support staff, and administrators. Teachers working to integrate the Core Curriculum into classroom practice need the collegiality of peers to solve the problems inherent in learning new content and new skills. Teachers and school administrators will need to collaborate to analyze gaps in their curriculum, review instructional practices, and plan how to address identified needs. Such collaborative efforts will require time for teachers to meet on a regular basis and a structure for the tasks to be addressed during that time. Leadership and significant professional development resources will need to be committed.

**The Core Curriculum relies on research and theory that are well grounded, nationally-recognized and reported in education’s professional literature.** The plans for the implementation of the Core Curriculum are based upon research and theory on effective practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment within the content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. As teachers and administrators engage in research-based professional development, they will effectively implement instructional change.

**The Core Curriculum helps local districts provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum.** Guaranteed and viable curriculum is a combination of factors including:

- Providing opportunities for students to learn the content being assessed in each content area; and
- Ensuring that the articulated curriculum for a given course or grade level can be adequately addressed in the time available.\*

The Core Curriculum DE Team and the Content Area Work Teams have followed the following steps to work toward ensuring that the Core Curriculum supports a guaranteed and viable curriculum:

- Identified and communicated the content considered essential for all students.
- Developed an alignment process to be used by local districts to ensure that the local curriculum has the rigor and relevance needed by students and to reduce the amount of content covered to allow for more authentic instruction.
- Developed a process to review instructional practices and assist local districts in reducing instructional time spent on non-essential content and find ways to protect instructional time.

\*Definition adopted from Marzano, R. (2003) *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*. ASCD.

In addition, the Department continues to work on alignment of assessment systems with the Core Curriculum by:

- Collaborating with the Iowa Testing Programs to develop tools to measure the essential learning for all students.
- Implementing “Assessment for Learning” and “Assessment of Learning” into all Department efforts focused on instruction.

**The Core Curriculum will only be effective if it results in deep, lasting changes in the day-to-day work of teachers in every classroom.** The initial alignment work and formation of recommendations and a document will have limited impact without active, sustained engagement and commitment to change practices. Teachers and administrators should expect changes in many parts of the system as they put these processes in place at the district, building, and classroom level.



**Full implementation of the Core Curriculum is going to take time, persistence, and patience.** Changing how teachers teach and the way people work is second order change (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Conducting the actions to operationalize the Core Curriculum is likely to be challenging. Leaders and practitioners will need to stay the course and support each other.

**The Core Curriculum provides the mechanism to implement multiple elements of the school reform initiative.** The Iowa High School Project and the Iowa Focus on High School Reform establish the need for high expectations, rigorous and relevant curriculum, professional development, aligned assessments, and collaborative leadership. The Core Curriculum offers the structures and tools to help accomplish these priorities.

### ■ **Who is leading the work to develop and build the statewide capacity to implement the Iowa Core Curriculum?**

- The DE Core Curriculum Team has been formed to support implementation of the Core Curriculum statewide. The DE Core Curriculum Team includes consultants who represent literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, students with disabilities, early childhood, assessment, school improvement, leadership, and high school reform.
- The DE Core Curriculum Team works in conjunction with the Core Curriculum Advisory Team. This team is composed of representatives from urban, small and rural school districts, AEAs, and key stakeholder groups including the Iowa Association of School Board, Iowa State Education Association, and School Administrators of Iowa. Also included are representatives from the teacher preparation programs at the state's three Regents institutions: Iowa State University, University of Iowa, and University of Northern Iowa. This team will be charged with advising the Department in proposing a time line for implementation, assisting with creating the network, planning the professional development for the network, and monitoring the progress of the network.

School districts and the area education agencies play a critical role in delivering professional development and technical assistance as the Core Curriculum is implemented across the state. A network of practitioners will be organized to deliver the training and facilitation needed by schools to conduct the following actions critical to the successful implementation of the Core Curriculum:

- Aligning the district's standards, benchmarks, and curriculum to the Core Curriculum;
- Supporting improvements in instruction in the core content areas;
- Providing leadership and support for the successful implementation of the Core Curriculum in all schools;

- Identifying consistent practices and processes to ensure the successful implementation of Core Curriculum;
- Providing the structures and tools to enable schools to put the Core Curriculum in place;
- Disseminating information, technical assistance, and tools; and
- Interpreting state-level policy regarding requirements for accountability

The network of trainers/facilitators will participate in capacity building to ensure the consistent implementation of technical assistance materials. The network will work directly with schools to complete an alignment process and subsequent report identifying gaps. This group of trainers/facilitators will also play a collaborative role in helping school leaders establish a professional development plan for educators to improve their instructional practices that are aligned with the Core Curriculum.

### ■ **What should be considered in the design for successful implementation?**

It is the intent of the Department that the successful implementation of the Core Curriculum will be consistent across the state. Consistent technical assistance, processes, tools will be utilized by every school with the support of their AEA.

As the Department undertakes the process of designing an implementation plan, the following questions are among those that need to be addressed:

- What support to school leaders need to effectively implement the Iowa Core Curriculum?
- To what extent do local standards, benchmarks, and curriculum align to the Core Curriculum?
- How might schools engage their staff in reviewing their curriculum content and instruction?
- What processes will result in all schools fully implementing the Core Curriculum? What resources will be needed?
- What professional development and technical assistance are needed and how should they be delivered and supported?
- How will the AEA, local school districts, and the Department work in concert to effectively implement the Core Curriculum?

The Department is moving forward to ensure that professional development is aimed at improving curriculum, instruction, and assessment is aligned with and supportive of the Core Curriculum. A description of the alignment is being developed in literacy, mathematics, science, and other priority content areas. See the DE web site [www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/674/1023/](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/674/1023/).



Timely communication about the expectations for school personnel, requirements for implementation, and how to access support will be provided.

Collaboration among the DE, AEAs, local districts, schools, and key stakeholders will guarantee each and every Iowa student a world-class education focused on essential content made meaningful through compelling and effective instructional strategies. Through this collective work, Iowa will maintain its reputation of providing the best educational opportunities available.

## References

Elmore, R. F. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement: An imperative for professional development in education*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute

Elmore, R. F. (2003). A plea for strong practice. *Educational Leadership*. 61(3), 6-10.

Elmore, R. F. (2002). Hard questions about practice. *Educational Leadership*. 59(8), 22-25.

Gamoran, A., Porter, A.C., Smithson, J.L., & White, P.A. (1997). Upgrading high school mathematics instruction: Improving learning opportunities for low-achieving, low-income youth. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. (19)2, 325-338.

Hargreaves, A. & Fink, D., (2004). The seven principles of sustainable leadership. *Educational Leadership*. 61(7), 8-11.

Heritage, H.M. (2008). *Formative Assessment for Literacy, Grades K-6*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Marzano, R.J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano, R.J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B.A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McKnight, C.C., Crosswhite, F.J., Dossey, J.A., Kifer, E., Swafford, J.O., Travers, K.J., et al. (1987). *The underachieving curriculum: Assessing U. S. school mathematics from an international perspective*. Champaign, IL: Stipes.

Niebling, B.C., Roach, A.T., & Rahn-Blakeslee, A. (2008). Best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment alignment. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology*, (4)5, 1059-1072. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Newmann, F.M., King, M.B., Carmichael, D.L. (2007). *Authentic instruction and assessment*. Des Moines, IA: Iowa Department of Education.

Rowan, B. (1998). The task characteristics of teacher: Implications for the organizational design of schools. In R. Bernhardt, D. N. Hedley, G. Cattaro, & V. Swapoloulos (Eds.), *Curriculum leadership: Rethinking schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Creshkills, NJ: Hampton Press.

Schmidt, W.H. (1983a). High school course-taking: A study of variation. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 15(2), 167-182.

Schmidt, W.H. (1983b). High school course-taking: Its relationship to achievement. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 15(3), 311-332.

Sebring, P.A. (1987). Consequences of differential amounts of high school coursework: Will the new graduation requirements help? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(3), 257-273.

Stiggins, R.J., Chappuis, J., & Chappuis, S. (2006). *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning*. Portland, OR: Education Testing Service.

Stigler, J.W., & Hiebert, J. (1999). *The teaching gap: Best ideas from the world's teachers for improving education in the classroom*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Walberg, H.J., & Shanahan, T., (1983). High school effects on individual students. *Educational Researcher*, 12(7). 4-9.